

No. 8732

RESOLUTION REGARDING PROTESTS ON BEHALF OF HUMAN RIGHTS

ADOPTED by the General Assembly

WHEREAS, the General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), John Humbert, was arrested while engaging in an illegal protest inside the United States Capitol Rotunda on Ash Wednesday, March 4, 1987, along with Avery Post of the United Church of Christ, Arie Brouwer of the National Council of Churches, Joseph Nangle, justice and peace coordinator for the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, and Doris Anne Younger, General Director of Church Women United; and

WHEREAS, Avery Post, speaking on behalf of the group at a news conference prior to the arrest, said, "We are here today to bear in our bodies the humiliation of a nation that has misused power. We declare our complicity with policies that are inhumane" and further stated that apparently U. S. law had been broken by those who gave unauthorized support to the Nicaraguan resistance, and

WHEREAS, these religious officials then took it upon themselves to break U.S. law, and

WHEREAS, during several months of 1985 a staff member of the Disciples' Division of Overseas Ministries was assigned and paid by the Division to be Director of the National Clearinghouse of the Pledge of Resistance, the purpose of which is to recruit people to sign a pledge promising to demonstrate legally and/or illegally against U. S. policy in Central America, and

WHEREAS, the Disciples Peace Fellowship has helped to sponsor demonstrations and has encouraged people to engage in illegal protests regarding U. S. policy in Central America, and

WHEREAS, the professed reason for these protests and the encouragement of further protests is concern for the human rights of Central Americans, and

WHEREAS, the Soviet Union is committing atrocious violations of the human rights of the men, women, and children of Afghanistan, and

WHEREAS, according to Anthony Lewis of the New York *Times* (syndicated column published March 15, 1987), because of Soviet actions the number of refugees who have had to flee to other countries from Afghanistan is about five million (one-third of the pre-invasion population of Afghanistan and one-half of all the refugees in the world) and perhaps two million other Afghans have fled their homes to go to other parts of their own country because of Soviet bombing of their villages, and

WHEREAS, according to Helsinki Watch and Asia Watch quoted by Lewis, the Soviets are using "toy bombs" — devices made to look like toy trucks, dolls, and other objects attractive to children — which explode when picked up, "blowing off hands, maiming, blinding the victims," and

WHEREAS, additionally, according to Mr. Lewis, perhaps as many as 60,000 Afghan children have been taken from their parents and removed to the Soviet Union for indoctrination, and

WHEREAS, though the U. S. government permits many kinds of legal protests and demonstrations and usually treats with leniency those who engage in illegal protests, the Soviet government effectively prevents its people from protesting any of its actions, and therefore the Afghans in their suffering are truly lacking advocates with the Soviet government; and

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, October 16-21, 1987, ask that those demonstrating for human rights in the name of the denomination or on its behalf consider demonstrating at the Soviet Embassy in Washington or at the Kremlin in Moscow on behalf of the human rights of the Afghan people.